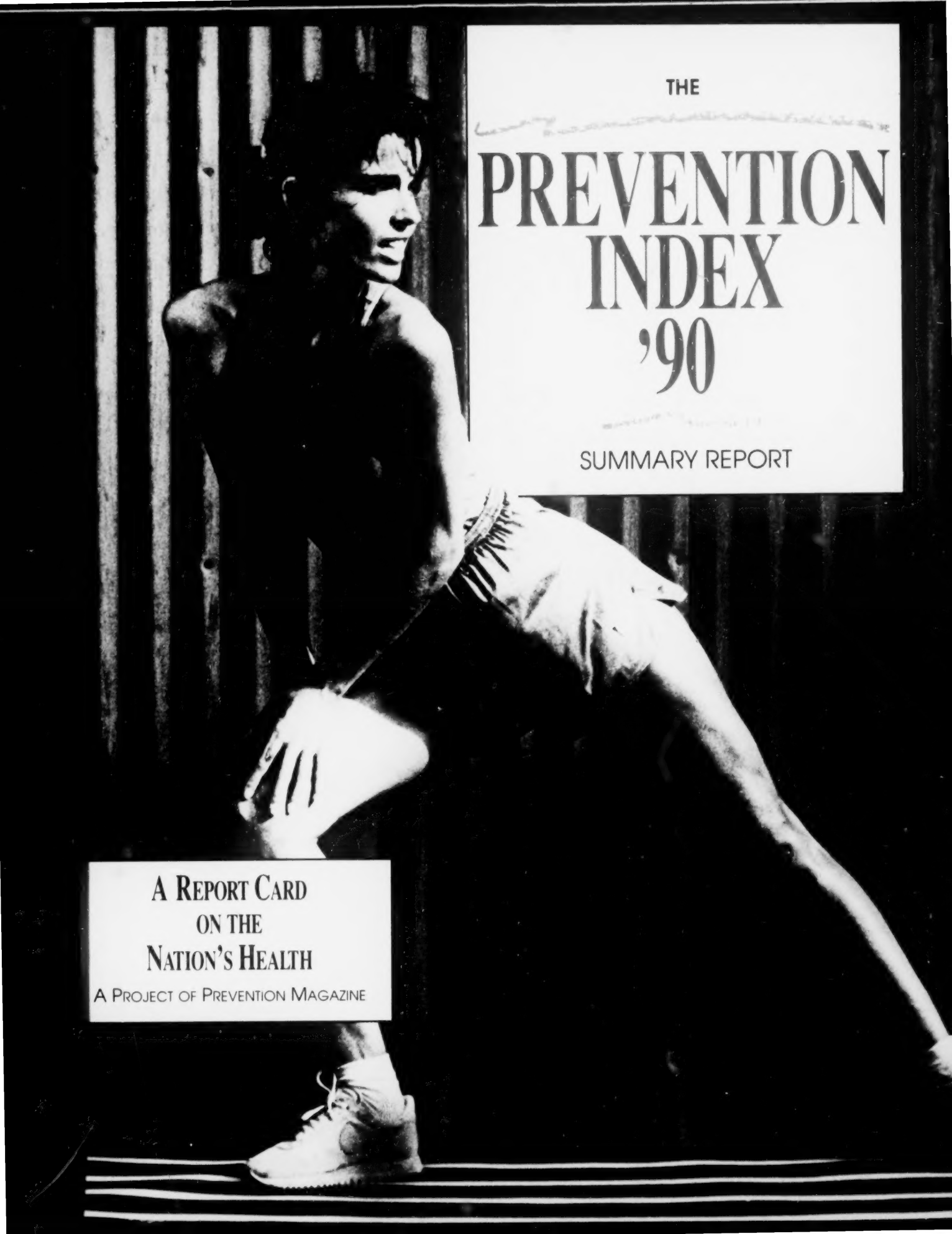

THE

PREVENTION INDEX '90

SUMMARY REPORT

A REPORT CARD
ON THE
NATION'S HEALTH

A PROJECT OF PREVENTION MAGAZINE

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PART ONE

The Prevention Index:
A Report Card on the Nation's Health

A Project of *Prevention* Magazine

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PART TWO

Prevention in America 7:
Steps People Take – or Fail to Take – for Better Health,
Survey Summary

Consumers' survey conducted for *Prevention* Magazine by Louis Harris & Associates, Inc. Fieldwork: November - December, 1989

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APPENDIX

Procedures for Computing the Prevention Index
A Note on Survey Methods
Your Personal Prevention Profile

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This year marks the 7th anniversary of the Prevention Index survey.

In all but one of those years, the Index score has risen. It hasn't increased as fast as we would have liked, but in seven years we've made a lot of progress.

When it comes to health behavior, the rate of change can sometimes be frustrating. But at *Prevention* Magazine, we're committed to health promotion for the long haul. And we're optimistic about the future.

Consider what has happened with cholesterol. In 1984, 42 percent of adults said they were trying to avoid too many high-cholesterol foods. Four years later, in 1988, the percentage trying to limit their cholesterol was exactly the same.

But in the last two years, that number has jumped eight points, to 50 percent. The recent emphasis on cholesterol and its dangers has led more than 14 million people to make positive changes in their diet. And this progress is being led by people in their middle years — many of whom face the risk of early heart disease.

We expect this progress to continue into the 1990's. And our goal at *Prevention* is to continue to provide people with the knowledge and resources they need to protect and improve their health.

That's one reason we're already planning for the 8th Index survey.

Sandy Beldon

Sanford Beldon
Publisher
Prevention Magazine

PART ONE

THE PREVENTION INDEX, 1990

The evidence is overwhelming that a diet high in fat is a major threat to health and longevity, and it appears that the public is getting that message.

In 1990, the Prevention Index registered its fifth increase in seven years. Our score climbed to 66.2 out of a possible 100, the highest we've recorded.

This represents a gain of .8 over the 1989 score of 65.4. And it is 4.7 points higher than our score of 61.5 in 1984, the first year of the survey.

The Index is a composite score, based on 21 major health-promoting behaviors. Each behavior is weighted for its health impact, and the total values are adjusted to a scale of 100. So an Index score of 100 would mean that everyone was doing all 21 preventive acts; zero would mean that no one was doing any of them. (For details on computing the Index, see the Appendix.)

The chart shows the 21 behaviors that comprise the Index, listed in order of decreasing importance as rated by a panel of public health experts. The first column of numbers shows the percentage of adults who practice each behavior, followed by the experts' rating on its importance for preventing disease and promoting health. The last column shows how much each behavior contributes to the Index score.

MOVING UP — AND DOWN

Of the 21 activities tracked by the Index survey, in the last year we made improvements in 12 areas. Although not all these changes were statistically significant, several are worth noting.

Gains of four percentage points were recorded in two dietary habits, limiting fat and limiting salt or sodium. The progress in fat limitation is particularly encouraging, since it comes after four years without any progress. The evidence is overwhelming that a diet high in fat — especially saturated fat — is a major threat to health and longevity, and it appears that the public is getting that message.

The number of people in the proper weight range also increased, by three percentage points. It would be nice to tie this directly to a reduction in fat consumption, but the connections are seldom that clear. If the number of people limiting their fat and cholesterol continues to increase, however, we may see substantial progress in this difficult category.

We have continued to make notable gains in seat belt use and in the prevalence of smoke detectors. These categories rank first and second, respectively, in the gains made over the seven years of the Index surveys.

In 1984, only one person in five reported always wearing a seat belt in the front seat of a car. In 1990, nearly two out of three people always buckle up. In 1984, sixty-six percent of homes had smoke detectors; now, 85 percent of homes have these safety devices.

Our 1990 report card also shows some weaknesses. The largest drop — four percentage points — came in efforts to control stress. Since the incidence of stress is not decreasing in our society, we may need a new emphasis on how to cope with this health threat.

THE PREVENTION INDEX, 1990

Health-Promoting Behavior	Adults Practicing	Experts' Rating, Scale	Value Contributed
1. Do Not Smoke	72	9.78	4.2
2. Avoid Smoking in Bed	90	9.24	5.0
3. Wear Seat Belt	63	9.16	3.5
4. Avoid Driving After Drinking	81	9.03	4.4
5. Smoke Detector in Home	85	8.53	4.4
6. Socialize Regularly	85	8.31	4.2
7. Frequent Strenuous Exercise	35	8.20	1.7
8. Drink Alcohol Moderately	91	8.15	4.5
9. Avoid Home Accidents	80	8.07	3.9
10. Limit Fat in Diet	58	7.82	2.7
11. Maintain Proper Weight	24	7.71	1.1
12. Obey Speed Limit	54	7.65	2.5
13. Annual Blood Pressure Test	84	7.62	3.8
14. Control Stress	65	7.58	3.0
15. Consume Fiber	60	7.41	2.7
16. Limit Cholesterol in Diet	50	7.15	2.2
17. Adequate Vitamins/Minerals	58	7.12	2.5
18. Annual Dental Examination	75	7.08	3.2
19. Limit Sodium in Diet	52	7.04	2.2
20. Limit Sugar in Diet	46	6.90	1.9
21. 7-8 Hours Sleep/Night	64	6.71	2.6
Prevention Index			66.2

Also, this year's survey recorded a slight increase in the number of people who say they smoke cigarettes. The change was small — two percentage points — but it suggests that we have reached a plateau in our smoking cessation efforts. Those with the greatest desire to stop smoking may have already done so, and future progress may be increasingly difficult.

Finally, the number of people who admit they exceed the speed limit has increased, from 44 to 46 percent. Although the gain is not large, it comes at the very time many states are raising the speed limit on rural portions of their interstate highways.

Understanding the Changes

What do these results tell us? One very positive message from this year's survey is that interest in health continues to increase. Advancements were made in a broad range of categories, from diet to home safety to dental examinations.

The results confirm two things we have learned from previous surveys. 1) Older people tend to have better health practices than younger people, particularly in the areas of diet/nutrition and safety. And 2) The people most likely to make positive changes are those in the middle years. They are coming to terms with their own mortality, and taking steps to improve their health.

Younger people — those under 35 — present a particular problem. Asking them to change the way they eat or exercise or behave, in order to prevent a health problem 10 or 20 or 30 years away, has proven difficult.

But the progress registered this year in limiting fat consumption offers some reason for optimism. The gains we made, though not huge, were across-the-board — men and women, all age groups, all income levels.

This suggests that when Americans focus their resources on a key health issue, the impact can be significant. If people understand a problem and what they can do about it, if help and support are widely available, many will make healthy changes. The challenge now is to maintain our positive momentum.

PREVENTION INDEX SCORES

1984	61.5
1985	63.2
1986	64.1
1987	65.2
1988	64.8
1989	65.4
1990	66.2

PART TWO

PREVENTION IN AMERICA 7:

STEPS PEOPLE TAKE – OR FAIL TO TAKE – FOR BETTER HEALTH

SUMMARY

THE INDEX SURVEY

This 7th annual nationwide survey of the American public was commissioned by *Prevention* Magazine, published by Rodale Press, as part of its ongoing project known as the Prevention Index. The Prevention Index is an annual measure of the effort Americans are making to prevent accidents and disease and to promote good health and longevity.

To discover which health and safety habits Americans are practicing, Louis Harris and Associates interviewed 1,250 randomly selected adults across the country by telephone, from November 6 through December 13, 1989. The interviews concentrated on important risk factors and habits believed to influence the long-term morbidity and mortality rates of the American people. Twenty-four key factors have been included in each of the six annual surveys.

The findings from the 1989 survey, when compared to the results of the surveys from 1983 through 1988, clearly reveal areas where the nation is progressing and areas where the nation is standing still or falling behind. With each additional year's data, this series of surveys grows in its power to illuminate a preventive health agenda for the nation.

SURVEY ACCURACY

Surveys are subject to several sources of error. The most important are:

- *Nonresponse*, if those who are interviewed differ from those who are not interviewed.
- *Random or sampling error*, which may in theory be substantial, even on very large surveys.
- *Question wording*, particularly where the survey is measuring an attitude or a future intention and not a "fact." Several equally good questions may yield different (and equally valid) responses. In addition, question sequence can influence the responses, particularly to attitude questions.

Despite these possible sources of error, the results presented in this report do reflect the most reliable information available. And the 1989 survey, along with its earlier counterparts, provides one of the most comprehensive time-series assessments of health and safety factors ever obtained from national cross sections of Americans.

A NOTE ON READING THE TABLES

An asterisk (*) on a table signifies a value of less than one-half percent (0.5%). A dash (-) represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100 percent because of computer rounding, multiple answers from respondents, or the elimination of "no answers."

PUBLIC RELEASE OF SURVEY FINDINGS

All Louis Harris and Associates surveys are designed to adhere to the code of standards of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls (NCPP). Because data from the survey will be released to the public, any release must stipulate that the complete report is available.

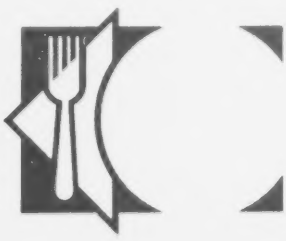
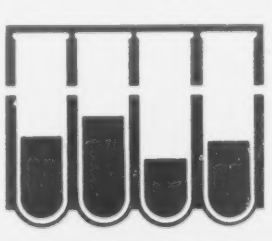
PROJECT RESPONSIBILITY AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Harris team responsible for the design and analysis of the questionnaire was Humphrey Taylor, President; Robert Leitman, Senior Vice President; and Phoebe A. Wilkinson, Research Associate.

Louis Harris and Associates would like to thank *Prevention* Magazine for commissioning this research. We would in particular like to thank Robert Rodale, editor of *Prevention*, Sanford Beldon, *Prevention*'s publisher, and Tom Dybdahl, who manages the project for *Prevention*, for their continued support.

Louis Harris and Associates is responsible for final determination of the topics, question wordings, collection of the actual data, and analysis and interpretation of the report.

Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

PART TWO

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

The oldest group of Americans is still more likely than the youngest group to practice a majority of the preventive habits, although the gap is closing slowly.

The 1990 Prevention Index is the latest measurement of America's progress in practicing preventive health habits.

Once again, the results show that the average adult American practices approximately two-thirds of the twenty-four behavior items that the series has tracked over the years. The oldest group of Americans is still more likely than the youngest group to practice a majority of the preventive habits, although the gap is closing slowly. There are many areas of improvement, as well as areas of decline, which are reported below.

AUTO SAFETY

Seat belt use continues to rise. This year 63 percent of adult Americans report that they always use seat belts when in the front seat of a car — up from 60 percent last year and from only 19 percent in 1983. At the other extreme, only 11 percent say they "never" wear a seat belt — down from 13 percent the year before and from 53 percent in 1983. There is overwhelming public support for mandatory seat belt laws. Only 18 percent of Americans oppose them, including only 27 percent in states without such laws.

The biggest improvement in seat belt use this year has come in states with no seat belt laws, but these remain well below the national average.

Driving over the legal speed limit, on the other hand, is a problem which may be getting worse. For the first time, less than half of all drivers (49%) claim that they always drive at or below the speed limit — down from 56 percent in 1983.

The proportion of drivers who admit to drinking and driving has not changed significantly this year, but it is still lower than it was in the early 1980's.

SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

If smoking is continuing to decline, the pace of change is too slow to be detected in this survey. Twenty-eight percent of all adults still smoke cigarettes, compared to 30 percent in 1983.

A further 6 percent of Americans smoke pipes, cigars, or use chewing tobacco, bringing the proportion who use some form of tobacco to just over one-third (34%).

For the first time, less than half of all drivers claim that they always drive at or below the speed limit.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

The proportion of Americans who drink moderately or not at all (91%) was higher this year than in any of the previous six surveys. But the differences are not statistically significant, and may therefore not be real. However, this improvement is consistent with other reports of declining liquor sales.

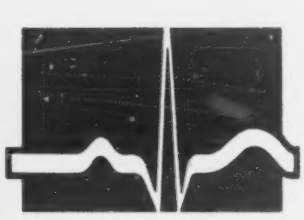
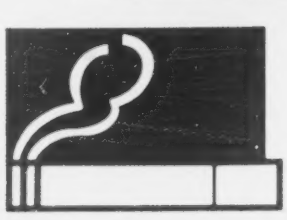
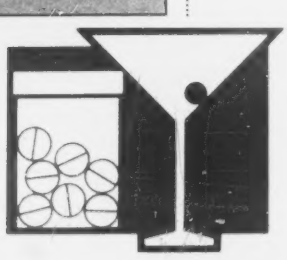
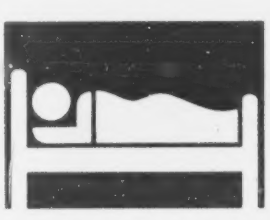
This year's survey results are virtually identical to the two previous surveys, both of which showed a decline in drug use. An overwhelming 94 percent of Americans report that they never use any recreational drugs.

These data are consistent with the more detailed surveys conducted for the National Institute for Drug Addiction which have shown a substantial decline in drug use among adults, college students, and high school seniors since 1985.

STRESS

The proportion of Americans who report that they feel "a great deal of stress" once a week or more often (60%) has not changed significantly. One-fourth of these people experience great stress every day.

The number of people who are attempting to control stress in their lives is slightly down since last year, from 69 to 65 percent. People 65+ and those with the least education are less likely to take steps to control stress than other population groups.

Exercise

The proportion of adults who get strenuous exercise three or more days a week — 35 percent — has not changed. Seventy-six percent report that they get "regular exercise" either at work or somewhere else.

More people are walking for exercise. Seventy-five percent (up from 68% last year) say they walk for exercise and almost half of all Americans (49%) walk for exercise several times each week.

Nutrition

Over the past two years the public has become *more* conscious of the need to avoid high-cholesterol foods (up 8 percentage points) and fatty foods (up 4 percentage points), and of the need to get enough calcium (up 1 percentage point).

However, there has been a decline in efforts to "get enough vitamins and minerals," and to avoid sugar-rich and sweet foods (both down 5 percentage points since 1983).

There has been no change in the percentage who try to eat enough fiber, but interest in eating fish regularly has declined (down 5 percentage points since 1987).

Seventy-five percent of American adults say they walk for exercise, and nearly half of all adults walk several times each week.

Weight Control

There is no evidence that Americans are winning the "battle of the bulge." The proportion of adults who are overweight remains stuck at close to 60 percent, while 34 percent weigh at least 10 percent more than their recommended weight.

About 15 percent of adults are below the weight range for their weight and frame structure.

Over the past two years, the public has become more conscious of the need to avoid high-cholesterol foods and fatty foods.

Home Safety Precautions

Americans are more conscious of the need to take special steps to avoid accidents in and around their homes than they were seven years ago, although there is no change from the 1988 survey.

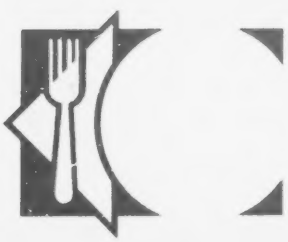
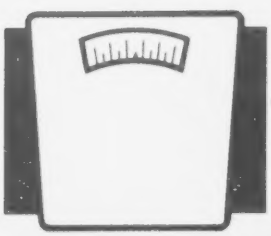
The proportion of people living in homes with smoke detectors has continued to rise. Eighty-five percent report having smoke detectors, compared to 67 percent in 1983.

The proportion of those who smoke in bed remains unchanged at 10 percent. Smoking in bed is the major cause of domestic fires.

Regular Medical Tests

The proportion of people who say they have their cholesterol level measured once a year or more often has increased again this year, to 53 percent. This may be related to the increased number of people who report they are trying not to eat too much fat and cholesterol.

The percentage of adults who have an annual dental exam (75%) is the same as it was in 1987. But the number who have more than one such exam a year has increased to its highest level yet — 53 percent.

TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS
(1983 - 1989)

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	Percentage Point Change From 1983 to 1989	Percentage Point Change From 1988 to 1989
Nonsmoking and Restricted Use of Alcohol							
Do not smoke cigarettes	70	70	72	74	72	+2	-2
Drink alcohol moderately	54	55	50	50	51	-3	+1
(Drink moderately or do not drink at all)	89	88	86	90	91	+2	+1
Exercise and Weight Control							
Get strenuous exercise three or more days a week	34	31	35	36	35	+1	-1
Are within the weight range recommended for their height, build, and sex*	23	21	24	21	24	+1	+3
(Are not overweight)	42	38	40	36	39	-3	+3
Diet and Nutrition							
Try a lot to get enough vitamins and minerals	63	63	59	57	58	-5	+1
Try a lot to eat enough fiber	59	59	60	60	60	+1	0
Try a lot to avoid eating too much fat	53	56	54	54	58	+5	+4
Try a lot to avoid eating too much salt or sodium	53	54	54	48	52	-1	+4
Try a lot to avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	51	50	49	47	46	-5	-1
Try a lot to get enough calcium	50	57	54	53	55	+5	+2
Try a lot to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods	42	42	42	48	50	+8	+2
Control of Stress							
Socialize with friends or relatives once a week or more	84	85	83	84	85	+1	+1
Get seven or eight hours sleep most nights	64	64	61	62	64	0	+2
Take specific steps to control or reduce stress	59	69	68	69	65	+6	-4
Periodic Examinations and Tests							
Have a blood pressure reading at least once a year	82	87	84	83	84	+2	+1
Have a dental checkup at least once a year	71	74	75	71	75	+4	+4
Women who have a Pap smear test every one or two years	75	78	75	79	76	+1	-3
Women who examine their breasts at least once each month for signs of cancer	37	48	42	51	44	+7	-7
Safety Precautions							
Say that no one in their home smokes in bed	88	91	92	90	90	+2	0
Say they take specific steps to avoid accidents in and around the home	72	80	81	82	80	+8	-2
Say they have a smoke detector in their home	67	76	82	81	85	+18	+4
Drivers who say they drive at or below the speed limit all the time	56	50	50	51	49	-7	-2
Drivers who say they either never drive after drinking or don't drink at all	68	71	74	78	79	+11	+1
Say they wear seat belts all the time when in the front seat of a car	19	41	57	60	63	+44	+3

**Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables were used for the classification. Bases vary slightly across the years: 995 (1983), 1061 (1985), 1008 (1987), 1031 (1988), 1015 (1989).*

SECTION ONE

GOOD HEALTH HABITS

One of the greatest differences between Americans who do and do not practice preventive habits is their level of education.

While there have been changes in the preventive health habits that are practiced by adults in the United States, the overall picture in the past seven years has remained relatively constant.

The 1990 Prevention Index finds that 25 percent of Americans are practicing at least three-quarters of the preventive habits studied.* This is slightly greater than the 23 percent who reported doing so in 1986. Over half (54%) practice at least 50 percent but not more than three-quarters of the preventive habits, and 21 percent practice up to half. The average percentage of health habits practiced by all adult Americans remains at 64 percent for the fourth year in a row.

Women, older adults, college graduates and people in clerical or professional and managerial positions are more likely to practice at least eighteen of the twenty-four preventive health habits (Table 1-1).

One of the greatest differences between Americans who do and do not practice preventive habits is their level of education. While only 17 percent of adults who did not finish high school practice at least three-quarters of the preventive health habits, 24 percent of high school graduates and 33 percent of college graduates report doing so.

Self-Reported Health Status

Exactly one-quarter of adults in the United States report that "in general" they would describe their own health as "excellent." Just under one-third (32%) describe their health as "very good," while another 27 percent say "good."

* *See p. 9 for the twenty-four items used.*

TABLE 1-1
PERCENT OF 24 KEY PREVENTIVE HABITS PRACTICED BY VARIOUS GROUPS

	Base		Preventive Habits: Those Who Practice 50% Or Less	Those Who Practice 51% - 75%	Those Who Practice 76% Or More
Total	1250	%	21	54	25
Region					
East	304	%	22	52	27
South	394	%	18	60	22
Midwest	303	%	25	50	25
West	249	%	20	53	27
Urbanism					
Central City	364	%	20	53	27
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	21	53	26
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	21	57	21
Sex					
Male	595	%	25	53	22
Female	655	%	17	55	28
Race					
White	1057	%	20	53	27
Black	101	%	19	68	14
Hispanic	68	%	27	53	21
Age					
18-29 years	303	%	27	54	20
30-39 years	300	%	20	58	23
40-49 years	213	%	18	56	26
50-64 years	239	%	17	52	31
65 and over	192	%	21	50	29
Education					
Not high school graduate	176	%	28	54	17
High school graduate	438	%	22	54	24
Some college	315	%	20	57	23
Four-year college graduate	317	%	15	52	33
Household Income					
$7,500 or less	97	%	26	56	18
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	27	51	21
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	22	55	23
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	21	51	28
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	11	58	31
$50,001 and over	232	%	18	54	28
Occupation					
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	26	56	18
Clerical, sales	201	%	18	54	28
Professional, manager or proprietor	298	%	14	57	28

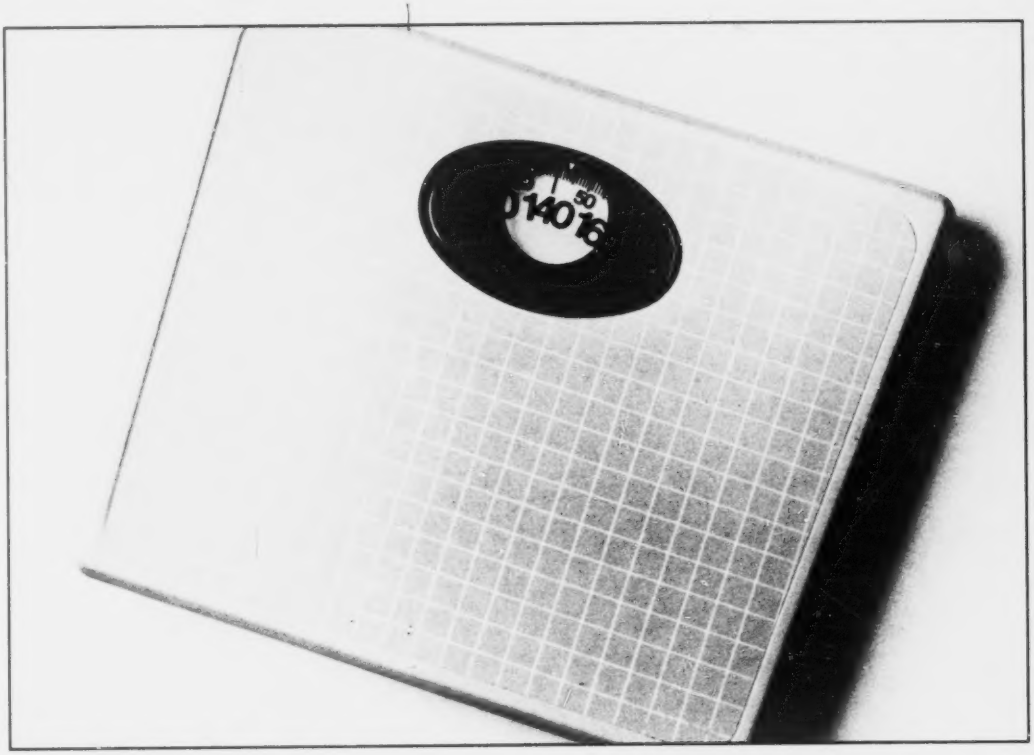
Twelve percent of adults report that their health is only "fair," while an additional 4 percent say "poor."

The practice of preventive habits and one's description of his or her health are directly related. A full 35 percent of those who practice at least three-quarters of the twenty-four preventive health habits consider themselves to be in "excellent" health, compared with 22 percent of those who practice at least half and 18 percent of those who practice fewer than half.

SECTION 2

WEIGHT CONTROL

Americans are woefully unsuccessful in being able to control their weight.



Sixty-one percent of adults in the United States are overweight (Table 2-1). More than half of these people are at least 10 percent over the recommended weight range for their height and frame size. Both figures represent a slight decrease from the 1988 survey, although the percentage of those who are now at least 10 percent over their recommended weight has risen from 30 percent in 1983 to 34 percent in 1989.

Just under one-quarter (24%) of adults fall within the recommended weight range for their height and frame structure, and an additional 15 percent are below the recommended range.

Americans who did not finish high school are the least likely to be within the recommended weight range, as are those with lower household incomes (Table 2-2). Not surprisingly, those who consider their own health to be "fair" or "poor" are the least likely to maintain recommended weight.

Since the inaugural Prevention Index survey in 1983, the number of overweight Americans has hovered around the 60 percent mark. Little progress can be seen. As a nation, we do not seem to be hearing the message about the long-term risks of being overweight, or we do not care, or we are woefully unsuccessful in being able to control our weight.

TABLE 2-1

TRENDS IN WEIGHT CONTROL

Base: Age 25 and older and classifiable

Base	1983 Survey 995 %	1985 Survey 1061 %	1987 Survey 1008 %	1988 Survey 1031 %	1989 Survey 1015 %
Overweight					
Total	58	62	59	64	61
30% or more above range	6	8	7	8	8
20-29.9% above range	9	7	8	10	9
10-19.9% above range	15	14	17	18	17
5-9.9% above range	13	16	14	15	13
Up to 4.9% above range	16	16	13	14	13
Within Recommended Range	23	21	24	21	24
Underweight					
Total	19	17	16	15	15
Up to 4.9% below range	9	9	8	8	8
5-9.9% below range	6	4	5	5	5
10% or more below range	4	4	3	2	3

**Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company tables were used for the classification. Bases vary slightly across the years: 995 (1983), 1061 (1985), 1008 (1987), 1031 (1988), 1015 (1989).*

TABLE 2-2

PERCENT OF ADULTS WHO KEEP THEIR WEIGHT WITHIN THE RECOMMENDED RANGE

Base: Age 25 and older and classifiable

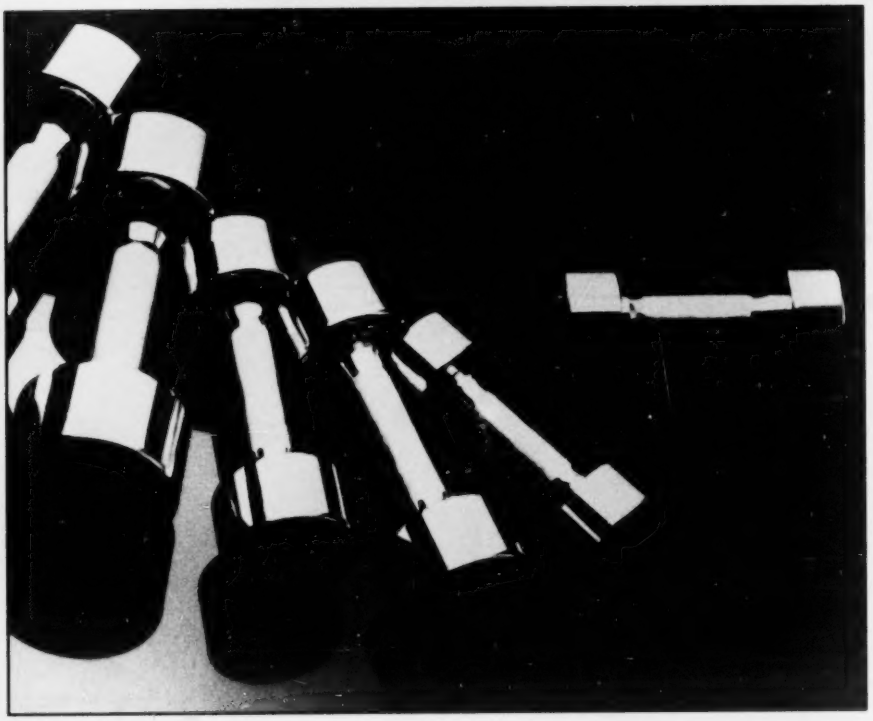
	Base		Weight Within Recommended Range
Total	1015	%	24
Region			
East	237	%	24
South	322	%	22
Midwest	251	%	24
West	205	%	25
Urbanism			
Central City	303	%	22
Rest of metropolitan area	452	%	24
Outside metropolitan area	260	%	25
Sex			
Male	467	%	23
Female	548	%	24
Race			
White	862	%	25
Black	84	%	16**
Hispanic	51	%	21**
Age			
18-29 years	127	%	22
30-39 years	281	%	26
40-49 years	201	%	25
50-64 years	222	%	20
65 and over	184	%	24
Education			
Not high school graduate	141	%	18
High school graduate	355	%	26
Some college	239	%	24
Four-year college graduate	277	%	24
Household Income			
$7,500 or less	67	%	16**
$7,501-$15,000	125	%	19
$15,001-$25,000	204	%	23
$25,001-$35,000	177	%	23
$35,001-$50,000	187	%	29
$50,001 and over	185	%	25
Occupation			
Blue-collar labor, service	243	%	22
Clerical, sales	156	%	23
Professional, manager or proprietor	256	%	27
Self-Described Health Status			
Excellent	254	%	30
Very good or good	603	%	25
Fair or poor	153	%	9
Preventive Habits			
Those who practice 76% to 100%	274	%	36
Those who practice 51% to 75%	545	%	21
Those who practice 0% to 50%	196	%	15

***Caution due to small base*

SECTION THREE

EXERCISE

Forty-two percent of men, compared with a much lower 29 percent of women, say that they exercise strenuously three or more times per week.



Three-quarters of Americans (76%) report that they get "regular exercise," either at work or somewhere else. But only one-third (35%) report that they "exercise strenuously," which is defined as exercising so that "you breathe heavily and your heart and pulse rate are accelerated for a period lasting at least twenty minutes," at least three times a week (Table 3-1). This proportion has remained statistically unchanged since 1983.

Men, Americans living in the suburbs, younger adults, and those with the highest household incomes are much more likely to be exercise enthusiasts (Table 3-2). Forty-two percent of men, compared with a much lower 29 percent of women, report that they "exercise strenuously" three or more times a week. Thirty-six percent of people in the suburbs, as opposed to 32 percent in urban centers, report the same.

Of adults between 18 and 29 years of age, 45 percent go through frequent and strenuous workouts. But only 33 percent of those between 50 and 64, and 22 percent of those 65 and older do the same. Twenty-eight percent of those whose household incomes do not exceed $15,000 exercise strenuously three or more times a week, compared with 45 percent of those earning more than $50,000.

Not surprisingly, Americans who describe their health as "excellent" and those who are underweight or within their recommended weight range are much more likely to report a high level of exercise as part of their lifestyle.

Walking for Exercise

Exactly three-quarters of adults report that during the past month they have done some "walking as exercise." This figure has risen dramatically since the previous Prevention Index, when 68 percent of Americans reported walking as a form of exercise. Forty-nine percent walk "daily" or "several times a week," a proportion that has remained statistically unchanged since 1986.

Just over half (51%) of those who walk for exercise report that they are walking "about the same as last year" in terms of frequency. Twenty-eight percent say that they are walking "more often," while 21 percent report that they are walking "less often."

TABLE 3-1
FREQUENCY OF STRENUOUS EXERCISE

	1983 Survey	1985 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey
Base	1254 %	1256 %	1250 %	1250 %	1250 %
Never	24	21	24	19	24
Less than 1 day a month	6	8	6	6	6
1 to 3 days a month	9	13	10	11	11
1 day a week	13	16	14	13	12
2 days a week	12	11	11	13	10
3 days a week	13	13	15	15	15
4 to 5 days a week	9	10	11	12	10
6 to 7 days a week	12	8	9	9	10
	34	31	35	36	35

TABLE 3-2

THOSE WHO HAVE WALKED SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK AS EXERCISE AND THOSE WHO EXERCISE STRENUOUSLY THREE OR MORE DAYS PER WEEK

	Base		Walked Several Times a Week Or More	Exercise Strenuously Three Times Per Week Or More
Total	1250	%	49	35
Region				
East	304	%	48	35
South	394	%	48	35
Midwest	303	%	48	32
West	249	%	51	38
Urbanism				
Central City	364	%	48	32
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	50	36
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	47	37
Sex				
Male	595	%	46	42
Female	655	%	51	29
Race				
White	1057	%	49	36
Black	101	%	50	36
Hispanic	68	%	49	29
Age				
18-29 years	303	%	45	45
30-39 years	300	%	40	36
40-49 years	213	%	50	32
50-64 years	239	%	56	33
65 and over	192	%	58	22
Education				
Not high school graduate	176	%	46	32
High school graduate	438	%	49	33
Some college	315	%	51	36
Four-year college graduate	317	%	48	38
Household Income				
$7,500 or less	97	%	54	32
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	51	26
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	46	31
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	48	38
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	54	37
$50,001 and over	232	%	45	45
Occupation				
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	46	40
Clerical, sales	201	%	48	33
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	45	40
Self-Described Health Status				
Excellent	319	%	50	47
Very good or good	745	%	48	32
Fair or poor	181	%	48	27
Body Weight Index				
Underweight	214	%	46	40
Within range	292	%	49	40
Overweight	673	%	51	32

Walking for exercise has a loyal following. Forty-two percent of adults who walk for exercise have been walking for "more than five years." Another 29 percent have been walking for between two and five years, while 27 percent are newcomers to the sport, walking for less than two years. Two out of five Americans (41%) who walk for exercise wear "special shoes that are designed for walking." This represents an increase of 12 percentage points since the question was first asked in 1986.

Women are slightly more likely than men to walk for exercise. And given the significantly lower chance of injury when walking as opposed to jogging or running, it is not surprising to see older Americans walking more frequently than younger ones. Forty-five percent of adults between 18 and 29 walk several times a week or more, as opposed to 58 percent of those over age 65.

Even overweight Americans are realizing the benefits of walking. Fifty-one percent of adults who are overweight walk at least several times each week as a form of exercise. This proportion is slightly higher than the 49 percent of those who are within their weight range and the 46 percent of those who are underweight who do the same.

SECTION FOUR

NUTRITION

Americans are paying attention to information about the dangers of too much cholesterol and fat.

About one-quarter of Americans are extremely conscious of all aspects of diet and nutrition. Twenty-seven percent report that they "try a lot" in at least eight of eleven key diet and nutrition concerns. Fifty-three percent try a lot on between three and seven areas, while one-fifth show minimal concern, trying a lot in no more than two areas.

Majorities of Americans report that they try a lot in regard to six specific diet and nutrition practices. Sixty-one percent try a lot to eat vegetables in the cabbage family, such as cabbage, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower, 60 percent do the same with regard to getting enough fiber from whole grains, cereals, fruits, and vegetables, 58 percent try to get enough vitamins and minerals either through food or supplements, 55 percent try to get enough calcium, and 52 percent make a conscious effort to avoid eating too much salt and sodium.

On the down side, Americans are making less of an effort in trying to avoid eating too much sugar and sweet foods. Forty-six percent (down from 52% in 1984) now state that they try a lot to avoid sugar.

Only 33 percent of Americans try to avoid caffeine in beverages, and the same proportion try to avoid foods with additives. Twenty-eight percent report that they try to eat fish twice a week compared with 34 percent in 1985 when the question was first included.

Fat and Cholesterol

Americans are paying attention to information about the dangers of too much cholesterol and fat. Fifty-eight percent of adults in the United States try a lot to avoid eating too much fat, a 4 percentage point increase over the 1987 and 1988 surveys. And 50 percent of Americans now report that they make the same effort in trying to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods, such as eggs, dairy products, and fatty meats. This proportion has climbed substantially since the 1987 survey, when the figure stood at 42 percent.

While it is heartening to see Americans responding to the dangers of too much cholesterol and fat, disturbing trends in other areas are emerging. People appear to be less concerned with sugar and losing interest in eating fish. And despite our growing understanding of the benefits of fiber, the proportion of Americans who try a lot to eat fiber has remained unchanged since 1983.

Nutrition and Exercise

Doctors and weight-loss specialists have increasingly been advocating the combination of good diet and exercise as a two-part method

TABLE 4-1

TRENDS IN SOME KEY ASPECTS OF DIET AND NUTRITION

	Those Who Try a Lot					
	1983 Survey	1985 Survey	1987 Survey	1988 Survey	1989 Survey	Change Since 1983
Base	1254 %	1256 %	1250 %	1250 %	1250 %	
Get enough vitamins and minerals in foods or in supplements	63	63	59	57	58	-5
Eat enough fiber from whole grains, cereals, fruits and vegetables	59	59	60	60	60	+1
Avoid eating too much fat	55	56	54	54	58	+3
Avoid eating too much salt or sodium	53	54	54	48	52	-1
Avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	51	50	49	47	46	-5
Get enough calcium in food or in supplements	50	57	54	53	55	+5
Avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods, such as eggs, dairy products and fatty meats	42	42	42	48	50	+8
Avoid caffeine in beverages such as coffee, tea and certain soda pop	x	37	34	33	33	-4*
Avoid foods that contain additives, such as preservatives, colorings and artificial flavorings	x	33	36	35	33	0*
Eat fish twice a week	x	34	33	28	28	-6*
Eat vegetables in the cabbage family, such as cabbage, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower	x	62	59	60	61	-1*

x = Not asked. ** = Change since 1985.*

Note: Twenty-seven percent of adults "try a lot" in eight or more of the eleven areas; 53% in three to seven areas; and 20% in two or fewer of the areas.

TABLE 4-2

NUTRITION/EXERCISE INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Base		Nutrition/Exercise Index* High on Both Nutrition and Exercise	High on Nutrition Only	High on Exercise Only	Not High on Nutrition or Exercise
Total	1250	%	13	13	22	50
Sex						
Male	595	%	11	10	30	47
Female	655	%	15	16	14	52
Age						
18-29 years	303	%	12	5	33	49
30-39 years	300	%	14	9	23	53
40-49 years	213	%	13	18	19	48
50-64 years	239	%	16	20	17	44
65 and over	192	%	11	19	12	55
Education						
Not high school graduate	176	%	12	12	20	54
High school graduate	438	%	12	14	21	51
Some college	315	%	12	15	24	47
Four-year college graduate	317	%	17	11	21	48
Occupation						
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	10	11	30	48
Clerical, sales	201	%	17	12	16	53
Professional, manager, or proprietor	298	%	15	12	25	47
Self-Described Health Status						
Excellent	319	%	19	11	28	40
Very good or good	745	%	12	13	21	53
Fair or poor	181	%	9	17	18	54
Body Weight Index						
Underweight	214	%	15	13	24	46
Within range	292	%	14	11	26	46
Overweight	673	%	12	14	20	52

**Those who score "high" on the nutrition index and exercise strenuously three times a week are "high on both;" those who score "high" on the nutrition index but do not exercise strenuously three times a week are "high on nutrition only;" those who exercise strenuously three times a week but do not score "high" on the nutrition index are "high on exercise only;" and those who do not score "high" on the nutrition index and do not exercise strenuously three times a week are "not high on nutrition or exercise."*

to promote general well-being and maintain or lose weight. Thirty-seven percent of adults who exercise strenuously also score highly on the nutrition index; that is, they practice at least eight of the eleven diet and nutrition habits. But half of those who exercise strenuously only practice between three and six habits, and 13 percent practice even fewer. The figures are worse for those who "never" exercise strenuously. Only 19 percent score "high" on the nutrition index, 55 percent fall into the middle range, and over one-quarter (27%) practice fewer than three of the diet and nutrition habits.

The Nutrition/Exercise Index shows that 13 percent of adults score highly on nutrition aspects *and* exercise strenuously three or more days per week (Table 4-2). Another 13 percent score highly with regard to nutrition only, and 22 percent exercise frequently and strenuously but do not score highly when it comes to their diet. One-half of Americans do neither.

Women are slightly more likely than men to score highly on the nutrition index *and* exercise strenuously and frequently, as are college graduates and those who regard their health as "excellent."

Looking at those who score highly on nutrition only or exercise strenuously only, women are more likely to be conscious of nutrition, whereas men are more likely to exercise. Older adults are more concerned with nutrition, while younger ones are putting themselves through vigorous workouts more often. People who consider their health to be "excellent" are more likely to exercise as opposed to watching their eating habits, whereas those who rate their health as "fair" or "poor" behave the opposite.

The Americans who ignore nutritional concerns *and* lead a more sedentary lifestyle tend to be women, less educated, overweight, and less positive about their own health status.

SECTION FIVE

REGULAR MEDICAL TESTS

More than half of Americans report that they have a dental exam more often than once a year, an increase of 9 percentage points in the past six years.

BLOOD PRESSURE READING

Eighty-four percent of adults in America report that they have their blood pressure checked at least once a year (Table 5-1). This number has changed little since 1983.

There is, however, a decrease in the percentage who report that they have their blood pressure checked "more often than once a year" (54% vs. 57% in 1988). Nonetheless, this is not a sign that Americans see this vital test as less important. Twenty-nine percent (up from 26% last year) now report that they have their blood pressure checked "once a year," maintaining the overall level of those who have their pressure checked at least once a year.

People in the West are least likely to have their blood pressure read at least once a year (78%), while people in the South — perhaps reflecting the older population in this area — are the most likely to do so (87%). Women are far more likely than men to have their blood pressure checked (89% vs. 78%), as are older Americans (those 50+) in comparison to their younger counterparts (89% vs. 81%).

CHOLESTEROL TESTING

Americans are paying more attention to cholesterol. Over half (53%) now report having their cholesterol checked at least once a year (Table 5-1). This is four per-

TABLE 5-1

TRENDS IN MEDICAL EXAMS AND TESTS

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1250 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	Change
Blood Pressure Screen						Since 1983
More often than once a year	52 } 82	59 } 87	56 } 84	57 } 83	54 } 84	+2
Once a year	30 }	28 }	28 }	26 }	29 }	
Every two years	6	5	6	6	5	
Every three or four years	2	3	3	1	2	
Every five years or less often	3	3	2	3	3	
Never	5	2	3	5	4	
Not sure	2	1	2	3	2	
Cholesterol Test						Since 1985
More often than once a year	x	20 } 48	19 } 45	21 } 49	24 } 53	+5
Once a year	x	28 }	26 }	28 }	29 }	
Every two years	x	7	7	6	6	
Every three or four years	x	4	4	4	3	
Every five years or less often	x	6	5	5	5	
Never	x	29	34	32	30	
Not sure	x	5	4	4	3	
Dental Exam						Since 1983
More often than once a year	44 } 71	46 } 74	50 } 75	47 } 71	53 } 75	+4
Once a year	27 }	28 }	25 }	24 }	22 }	
Every two years	8	7	6	8	5	
Every three or four years	4	3	4	4	3	
Every five years or less often	11	4	4	4	4	
Never	11	11	10	11	12	
Not sure	3	1	1	2	1	

x = *Not asked*

centage points higher than one year ago, and eight percentage points higher than the level reported in 1987. Not only are Americans attempting to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods, they are also becoming increasingly committed to monitoring their cholesterol levels through annual testing procedures.

Once again, women are more likely than men to have their cholesterol checked annually (57% vs. 50%). Similarly, older Americans, and those whose self-reported health status as only "fair" or "poor," are more likely than others to have their cholesterol monitored at least every twelve months.

Dental Exams

Three out of four adults in the United States report that they visit their dentist for a checkup at least once a year. This is four percentage points higher than the number reporting yearly exams in 1983 (Table 5-1). The frequency of dental exams is also on the rise, since more than half (53%) of adult Americans now report that they have a dental exam "more often than once a year," an increase of 9 percentage points in the past six years.

Younger adults, those who are more educated, and those who command the highest household incomes are the most likely to have annual dental checkups. In a reverse of the blood pressure and cholesterol test findings, Americans whose self-reported health status is "excellent" are much more likely to visit their dentist for an annual exam than those who regard their health as merely "fair" or "poor."

Pap Smear and Breast Self-Exam for Women

Seventy-six percent of American women report having a Pap smear test to detect the presence of cancerous cells at least every two years (Table 5-2). Over the course of the seven surveys, this finding is basically unchanged. The majority of women (55%) report having this test "once a year," while 15 percent have one "more often than once a year."

Women in urban areas are more likely than those in rural areas to have a Pap smear test at least every two years (82% vs. 71%). Younger women, women with higher household incomes, and those who report their health as "excellent" are also more likely to have a Pap smear test every two years.

Forty-four percent of American women say they examine their breasts to detect any possible cancer "at least once a month" (Table 5-2). This is 7 percentage points higher than the 37 percent who reported the same six years ago.

Women over the age of fifty are more likely than younger women to conduct these exams on themselves (49% vs. 41%). Fifteen percent of women state that they "never" examine their breasts for any possible signs of cancer, while an additional 3 percent report that they never do the exam because their doctor does.

TABLE 5-2
TRENDS IN TESTS AND SELF-EXAMS FOR WOMEN
Base: Women only

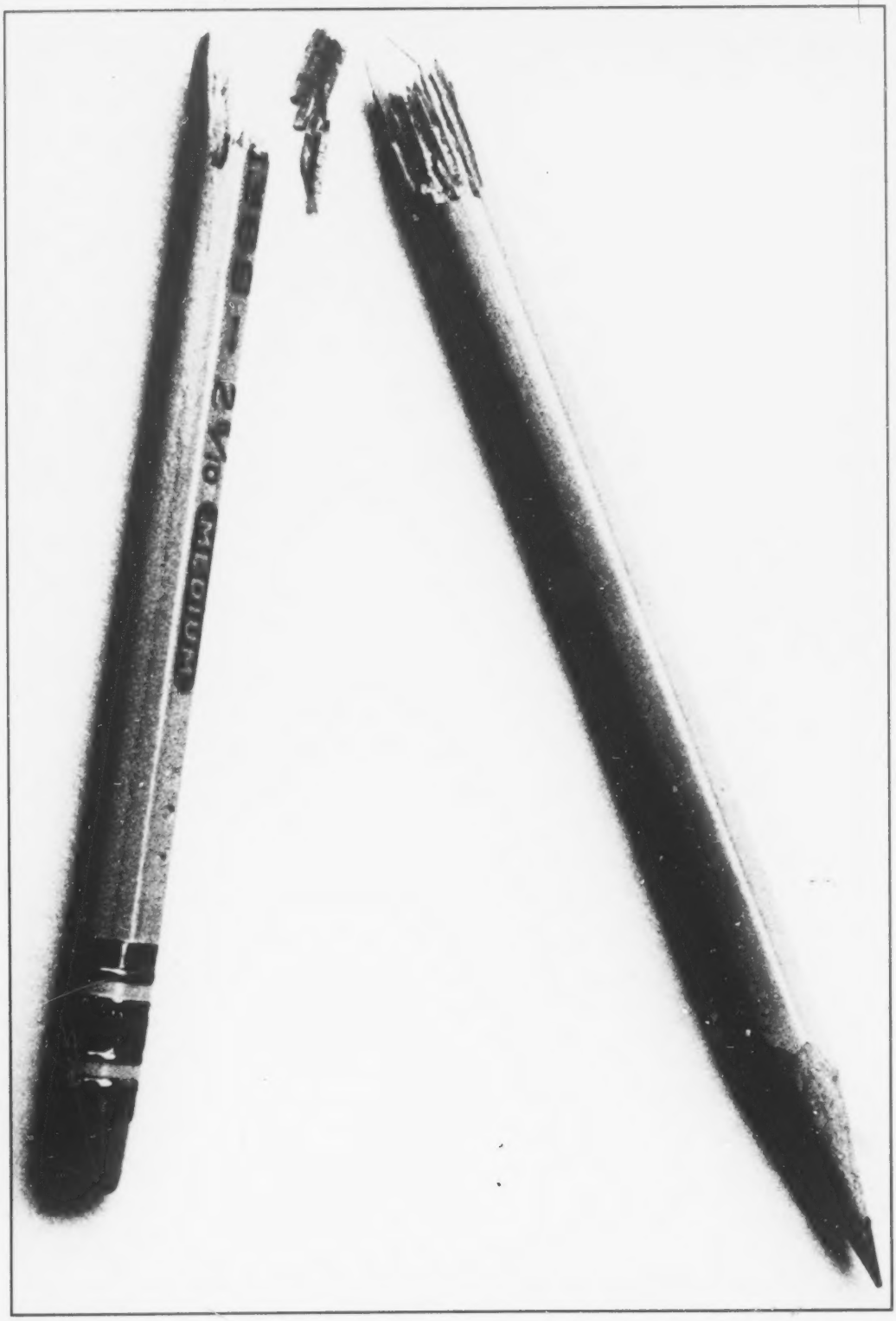
Base	1983 Survey 646 %		1985 Survey 640 %		1987 Survey 634 %		1988 Survey 652 %		1989 Survey 655 %	
Pap smear										
More often than once a year	18	75	15	78	17	75	15	79	15	76
Once a year	49		54		51		57		55	
Every two years	8		9		7		7		6	
Every three years	4		3		4		3		6	
Every four or five years	3		3		3		3		4	
Every six years or less often	2		3		3		3		3	
Never	13		12		10		9		10	
Not applicable (vol.)	1		1		2		1		1	
Not sure	2		1		2		2		1	
Breast Self-Exam										
At least once a month	37		48		42		51		44	
Several times a year	30		30		29		24		24	
Once a year	9		8		9		7		9	
Less than once a year	4		3		4		3		4	
Never	15		9		13		12		15	
I never do it — doctor does it (vol.)	2		1		2		1		3	
Not applicable (vol.)	*		–		1		*		*	
Not sure	1		1		1		*		*	

*Less than 0.5%

SECTION SIX

STRESS

Forty percent of people who smoke report that they feel a great deal of stress at least several times a week. Only 27 percent of nonsmokers say the same.



FEELINGS OF STRESS

Fifteen percent of adult Americans report feeling "a *great* deal of stress almost every day." A further 15 percent say they feel under great stress several days a week, while another 30 percent report the same feelings once or twice a week (Table 6-1). This finding — that well over half of the adult population feels under great stress at least once a week—has held constant over the past four years, suggesting that Americans do not perceive their life as getting any simpler.

Adults in the East are the most likely to say they feel "great stress" at least several times a week (35%), while those in the Midwest and the South are the least likely to say so (27% and 28%, respectively). Women are slightly more likely than men (32% vs. 28%) to report feeling great stress several times a week. Adults in their forties are the most likely age group to experience feelings of stress.

The frequency of stress, or perhaps the vulnerability to these feelings, appears to be related to how a person feels about his or her health overall. While only 27 percent of people who report

TABLE 6-1
TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF STRESS

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %	1985 Survey 1250 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %
Frequency of Stress					
Almost every day	16	14	17	18	15
Several days a week	12	13	15	15	15
Once or twice a week	27	33	30	30	30
Less often than once a week	29	30	27	27	26
Never	16	10	10	9	12
Not sure	1	1	1	1	1
Steps to Control Stress					
Yes, take steps to control	59	69	68	69	65
No, don't take steps	38	31	30	30	34
Not sure	3	1	1	1	1
Sleep					
6 hours or less	25	26	27	26	25
7-8 hours	64	64	61	62	64
9 hours or more	10	9	11	11	11
Not sure	1	*	1	1	*
Socializing with Others					
Once a week or more	84	85	83	84	85
Less than once a week	16	15	17	16	14
Not sure	*	*	1	1	*

*Less than 0.5%

their health status as excellent say they feel under great stress several times a week, the figure rises dramatically (to 45%) for those whose self-reported health status is only fair or poor.

Whether or not a person smokes appears to be related to his or her level of stress. Forty percent of people who smoke report that they feel a great deal of stress in their lives at least several times a week. Only 27 percent of nonsmokers say the same.

The 1988 survey found that educational levels, income levels, and the density of urbanism directly related to the levels of stress that were reported by Americans. The 1989 survey, however, finds that these distinctions are becoming increasingly blurred, suggesting that stress is slowly permeating all levels of society irrespective of socioeconomic status.

Controlling Stress

Almost one-third of the adults in the United States report feeling a great deal of stress at least several times a week. Not surprisingly, people are aware of the need to try to control this. About two-thirds of Americans report that they "consciously take steps to control or reduce the stress" in their lives (Table 6-1). An almost identical percentage (64%) report that they usually sleep seven or eight hours each night, and a solid 85 percent "socialize with close friends, relatives, or neighbors" at least once a week or more. The nation's sleep patterns and level of social activity have remained constant throughout the seven Prevention Index studies.

This year, however, there is a significant decrease in the percentage of people who are attempting to control or reduce stress in their lives. The 1988 survey found that 69 percent of Americans reported consciously attempting to control stress in their lives, whereas only 65 percent now report such efforts. The oldest Americans (age 65+)

and those with less education are the least likely to attempt to control stress in their lives, whereas people in professional or managerial occupations are the most likely to do so.

Smokers are less likely than nonsmokers to report that they get seven to eight hours of sleep per night (56% vs. 66%) as are less educated Americans, those with lower household incomes, and those with less prestigious occupations. Americans in their forties are the least likely to socialize at least once a week, whereas the youngest adults (18 to 29 years of age) and the oldest (65+ years) are the most likely to report high levels of social activity.

SECTION SEVEN

SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

The incidence of smoking has remained relatively constant since 1983. A solid core of smokers remains, despite the known risks of such behavior.

SMOKING AND NONSMOKING

Twenty-eight percent of American adults report that they smoke cigarettes. This has remained relatively constant since 1983, but it is down 15 percentage points since 1974 (Table 7-1). Still, this indicates just how hard it is to move towards a "smoke-free society." A solid core of diehard smokers remain, irrespective of known risks of such behavior.

Whether or not the public believes in a connection, it is clear from the survey that smoking and health status are directly correlated. Eighty-two percent of those who report their health to be excellent are nonsmokers, compared with 68 percent of those who describe their health as fair or poor.

The people who are most likely to be nonsmokers are 65 and older, more educated, have higher household incomes, and work in a professional or managerial capacity.

Six percent of Americans report that although they do not smoke cigarettes, they do smoke a pipe or cigar or use chewing tobacco. Combined with cigarette usage, this means that just over one-third (34%) of Americans are using some form of tobacco. Ten percent of cigarette smokers also smoke a pipe or cigar or use chewing tobacco.

CIGARETTE SMOKERS

Who are the people who ignore the warnings and evidence about the dangers of smoking? They tend to be male, less educated, in a

TABLE 7-1

TRENDS IN SMOKING AND NONSMOKING

Base	1974 1407 %	1975 1556 %	1978 1347 %	1983 1252 %	1984 1252 %	1985 1256 %	1986 1250 %	1987 1250 %	1988 1250 %	1989 1250 %
Smoke now	43	43	39	30	28	30	27	28	26	28
Do not smoke	57	57	61	70	72	70	72	72	74	71

Note: Because of population growth, the change in the absolute numbers of smoking adults can, of course, be less than the change in the percentage of smoking adults.
Sources are eight national surveys of adults aged 18 and older conducted by Louis Harris and Associates.

TABLE 7-2

TRENDS IN TWENTY-FOUR PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR ITEMS: SMOKERS VS. NONSMOKERS

Base	1989 Survey 1250 %	Smokers 339 %	Nonsmokers 898 %
Nonsmoking and Restricted Use of Alcohol			
Do not smoke cigarettes	71	-	100
Drink alcohol moderately	51	52	50
(Drink alcohol moderately or do not drink at all)	90	84	92
Exercise and Weight Control			
Get strenuous exercise three or more days a week	35	32	36
Are within the weight range recommended for their height, build, and sex*	24	23	24
(Are not overweight)	39	40	38
Diet and Nutrition			
Try a lot to get enough vitamins and minerals	58	55	59
Try a lot to eat enough fiber	60	55	62
Try a lot to avoid eating too much fat	58	52	60
Try a lot to avoid eating too much salt or sodium	52	46	54
Try a lot to avoid eating too much sugar and sweet food	46	43	47
Try a lot to get enough calcium	55	50	56
Try a lot to avoid eating too many high-cholesterol foods	50	45	51
Try a lot to avoid caffeine in beverages	33	20	38
Control of Stress			
Feel under great stress frequently	30	40	27
Socialize with friends or relatives once a week or more	85	89	83
Get seven or eight hours sleep most nights	64	56	66
Take specific steps to control or reduce stress	65	63	66
Periodic Examinations and Tests			
Have a blood pressure reading at least once a year	84	81	85
Have a dental checkup at least once a year	75	70	77
Have a blood test for cholesterol	53	47	56
Safety Precautions			
Say that no one in their home smokes in bed	90	80	94
Say they take specific steps to avoid accidents in and around the home	80	82	79
Say they have a smoke detector in their home	85	85	85
Drivers who say they drive at or below the speed limit all the time**	49	51	48
Drivers who say they either never drive after drinking or don't drink at all**	79	75	80
Say they wear seat belts all the time when in the front seat of a car	63	55	66
Tried drugs at least once	36	46	33
Done walking as exercise in past month	75	67	77

**Based on those aged 25 and above whose recommended weight could be calculated given their height/build/sex data. Metropolitan Life InsuranceCompany tables were used for the classification. Base: 1015*

***Base: Drivers only (1121)*

lower income bracket, and in blue-collar occupations (Table 7-2). They are certainly much more likely than nonsmokers to be risktakers. They are not as likely to wear seat belts, they are not as supportive of mandatory seat belt laws, and they are not as strict in making their own children wear seat belts. They are more likely to have experimented with drugs at least once in their lives, to have someone in their household who smokes in bed (not surprisingly), to drink more, and when they do drink they are more likely to do so immoderately.

Smokers do not take care of their health as carefully as do nonsmoking adults. They have their blood pressure and cholesterol checked less frequently. They do not visit their dentist as often. They are certainly less likely to restrict their intake of salt, fat, high-cholesterol foods, sugar, caffeine and additives. They are not as likely to eat vitamin- and calcium-enriched foods, fish, or high-fiber foods. They are less likely to have walked as a form of exercise, and even those smokers who do walk tend to walk shorter distances than their nonsmoking counterparts.

SECTION EIGHT

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

Moderate drinkers are a very different group from teetotalers. The highest proportion of moderate drinkers live in urban areas, are female, are 50+, and are more educated.

ALCOHOL USE

Thirty-nine percent of adult Americans report that they "never consume alcoholic beverages" (Table 8-1). Fifty-one percent of adults drink three drinks or less on days when they do drink and are thus termed "moderate drinkers." Nine percent of adults in the United States drink no fewer than four drinks on each day that they do drink, and are thus termed "heavy drinkers."

The proportion of nondrinkers is largest among residents of the South (where 50% "never" consume alcohol), those in rural areas (48% of whom do not drink), women (44% never drink), Americans aged 65 and older (57% do not drink), and the least educated (64% of people who did not finish high school do not consume alcohol). A majority (59%) of those who describe their health as fair or poor do not drink.

Moderate drinkers are a very different group. The highest proportion of moderate drinkers reside in urban areas, are female, are 50+ years old and are more educated. Almost nine out of ten Americans who describe their health as excellent and report

TABLE 8-1
TRENDS IN USE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Base	1983 Survey 1254 %		1985 Survey 1256 %		1987 Survey 1250 %		1988 Survey 1250 %		1989 Survey 1250 %	
Frequency of Alcohol Consumption										
Never	34		33		36		39		39	
Less than 1 day a month	16		15		13		17		16	
1 to 3 days a month	16		20		19		18		16	
1 to 2 days a week	19	65	19	66	21	64	14	61	18	60
3 to 4 days a week	7		6		5		5		5	
5 to 6 days a week	2		2		1		2		2	
Daily/7 days a week	6		4		5		5		5	
Not sure	*		*		*		*		*	
Quantity of Alcohol Consumption										
1 drink	21		22		21		21		23	
2 drinks	22	54	23	55	20	50	21	50	18	51
3 drinks	10		10		9		8		9	
4 drinks	5		4		6		4		4	
5 or more drinks	6		7		8		7		5	
Not sure	1		*		*		*		1	
Recreational Drugs										
Frequently	x		2		*		1		1	
Sometimes	x		7		1		1		1	
Only occasionally**	x		x		4		3		4	
Never	x		91		94		95		94	
Not sure	x		*		-		*		-	

x = Not asked
**Less than 0.5%*
***The "only occasionally" category was added in 1987 and 1988.*

that they consume alcohol do so moderately.

Drug Use

An overwhelming 94 percent of Americans report that they "never use any recreational* drugs such as marijuana, speed, and downers" (Table 8-1). This finding has remained statistically unchanged since 1987, although it has risen slightly since the question was first asked in 1985 (when 91% reported that they never used recreational drugs).

Women are slightly more likely than men to report that they never use drugs, and older Americans (those aged 40+) are more likely to avoid drugs than those under 40. Nevertheless, younger Americans

are continuing to stay away from illegal drugs, a finding that first became apparent in the 1987 survey. The percentage of younger adults abstaining from drug use rose by ten percentage points between 1984 and 1987, from 79 to 89 percent.

Drug Experimentation

This year's survey examined the drug issue in some additional depth. It found that more than one-third (36%) of Americans admit to trying "at least one drug once or twice" in their life "to see what it was like." Of these 36 percent, over half (53%, or 19% of the total population) have "taken drugs a few times." Thirteen percent of people who have taken drugs a few times have taken a drug in the last month, though these people represent only 2 percent of the adult population. Almost half (49%) of the people who used drugs in the past month have taken a drug in the last week.

A majority (57%) of adults between 18 and 39 admit that they have tried drugs at least once in their lives. The percentage dwindles to a mere 7 percent of Americans 50 years of age and older.

Drug experimentation directly correlates with income and educational levels. Forty-two percent of college graduates have tried drugs at least once, but only 25 percent of people who did not finish high school report the same. Forty-two percent of people whose household incomes exceed $35,000 have tried drugs, compared with only 28 percent of those whose households earn less than $15,000.

Relationship Among Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use

Adults who report that they drink alcohol are more likely to smoke cigarettes than those who do not drink. Sixty-nine percent of adults who drink do not smoke cigarettes, but the figure rises to 77 percent for those who do not drink at all. Similarly, only 32 percent of cigarette smokers do not drink alcohol, whereas 42 percent of non-smokers do not drink.

Cigarette smokers who drink alcohol are also less likely to be mod-

**The word "recreational" is used in the survey instrument to encourage accurate and truthful responses and in no way should be taken to represent the opinion of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.*

TABLE 8-2

PERCENT OF THOSE RESTRICTING THEIR ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE BY VARIOUS CHARACTERISTICS

	Base		Do Not Drink Alcohol	Drinkers Who Drink Alcohol Moderately*	Never Use Any Recreational Drugs
Total	1250	%	39	84	94
Region					
East	304	%	31	80	93
South	394	%	50	85	94
Midwest	303	%	42	83	95
West	249	%	29	87	93
Urbanism					
Central City	364	%	35	88	93
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	38	81	94
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	48	84	94
Sex					
Male	595	%	34	77	92
Female	655	%	44	91	96
Race					
White	1057	%	36	84	94
Black	101	%	49	91	98
Hispanic	68	%	55	62	89
Age					
18-29 years	303	%	33	74	88
30-39 years	300	%	29	81	90
40-49 years	213	%	34	89	97
50-64 years	239	%	50	90	98
65 and over	192	%	57	98	99
Education					
Not high school graduate	176	%	64	75	93
High school graduate	438	%	43	83	95
Some college	315	%	35	80	93
Four-year college graduate	317	%	24	90	93
Household Income					
$7,500 or less	97	%	52	79	95
$7,501-$15,000	156	%	53	85	96
$15,001-$25,000	247	%	44	85	91
$25,001-$35,000	210	%	33	84	94
$35,001-$50,000	214	%	31	89	94
$50,001 and over	232	%	21	81	92
Occupation					
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	35	74	94
Clerical, sales	201	%	38	88	92
Professional, manager or proprietor	298	%	25	87	91
Self-Described Health Status					
Excellent	319	%	31	88	95
Very good or good	745	%	37	83	93
Fair or poor	181	%	59	77	96
Stress Control					
Take steps to control stress	809	%	39	83	94
Do not take steps	423	%	41	84	95
Feeling of Stress					
Feel stress at least several times a week	380	%	34	79	92
Feel stress less often	859	%	42	86	94

**Based on the 60% of all adults who sometimes drink; this proportion is not necessarily constant across subgroups. "Moderate" drinking is defined here as 3 or fewer drinks on a day in which alcohol is consumed.*

erate drinkers when compared to nonsmokers who also drink. Seventy-six percent of smokers who drink do so moderately, while 87 percent of nonsmokers report the same.

Cigarette smokers are also more likely to use illegal drugs. Ninety-five percent of nonsmokers, 97 percent of adults who do not drink, and 92 percent of those who do drink report that they "never" use any illegal drugs. Only 89 percent of smokers make that claim.

SECTION NINE

HOME SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

It is still the least privileged who are the least likely to have a smoke detector in their home.

Eight out of ten Americans "take special steps or precautions to avoid accidents" in and around their homes (Table 9-1). This is significantly higher than the 72 percent who reported the same in the first Index survey in 1983, but is statistically unchanged in the four years since the 1985 survey.

The use of smoke detectors, however, continues to rise, with 85 percent of adults in the United States reporting that they have a smoke detector in their home. This number has risen dramatically since 1983, when only two-thirds of homes had smoke detectors. As in 1988, 90 percent of Americans report that no one in their household smokes in bed.

Four-year college graduates are the least likely to say that they take steps to avoid accidents in the home (73% vs. 80% of all adults), as are those whose households earn annual incomes of $50,000 and more. Otherwise, there are no patterns that emerge as to specific groups of Americans who try to avoid accidents in the home.

Homes in the East are more likely than those in the South to have smoke detectors (92% vs. 80%). The presence of smoke detectors also appears to be linked to higher socioeconomic groups. Only 72 percent of adults who did not finish high school report that they have smoke detectors in their homes, compared with 90 percent of college graduates. And 79 percent of households who earn less than $7,500 annually have smoke detectors, while a much greater 92 percent of households earning $35,000 or more do.

The gaps among those who do and do not have smoke detectors continues to narrow slightly, but it is still the least privileged who are the least likely to have such a vital safety device in their homes.

TABLE 9-1
TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF SAFETY AT HOME

Base	1983 Survey 1251 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %	Change Since 1983 1250 %
Precautions at Home						
Yes, take steps	72	80	81	82	80	+8
Smoke Detector						
Have a smoke detector	67	76	82	81	85	+18
Smoking in Bed						
Yes, someone smokes in bed	11	9	8	10	10	-1

** Less than 0.5%.*

SECTION TEN

AUTO SAFETY

The group least likely to wear seat belts is also least likely to respect speed limits. Only one-third of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 drive at or below the speed limit.

The number of Americans who always wear seat belts when they are in the front seat of a car continues to rise. The 1983 survey found that only 19 percent of adults reported wearing seat belts all the time when they were in the front seat of a car (Table 10-1). The figure now stands at 63 percent, a three point increase since last year, a six point increase since 1987, and a twenty-two point increase since 1985, reflecting the dramatic impact of mandatory seat belt laws that were adopted by many states.

TABLE 10-1
TRENDS IN SOME ASPECTS OF AUTO SAFETY

Base	1983 Survey 1251 %	1985 Survey 1256 %	1987 Survey 1250 %	1988 Survey 1250 %	1989 Survey 1250 %
Wearing Seat belts					
All the time	19	41	57	60	63
Sometimes	26	31	27	26	26
Never	53	28	15	13	11
Not applicable (vol.)	1	*	*	1	*
Not sure	*	*	*	-	*

Base	1983 Survey 1097 %	1985 Survey 1102 %	1987 Survey 1115 %	1988 Survey 1117 %	1989 Survey 1121 %
Driving at or Below Speed Limit					
All the time	56	50	50	51	49
Sometimes	38	45	45	44	46
Never	5	5	4	5	5
Not sure	*	*	-	-	1
Driving After Drinking					
All the time	5	3	2	3	2
Sometimes	25	25	23	19	19
Never	52	59	49	60	56
Don't drink (vol.)	16	12	25	18	23
Not sure	2	1	*	*	*

*Less than 0.5%

Nearly two-thirds of adults (65%) in states with seat belt laws obey them (Figure 10-A). Almost half of adults (48%) in states that do not require seat belt usage are also buckling up every time they get in the front seat of a car.

The gap between seat belt usage in states with and without mandatory seat belt laws is closing. Last year's gap of twenty-five percentage points has closed to seventeen points in 1989. Also encouraging is the finding that the percentage of adults in states without seat belt laws who "never" wear seat belts is declining. The 1988 survey found that 29 percent of adults in these states reported never wearing seat belts. The 1989 figure has dropped eleven points to 18 percent.

However, it is discouraging to note that younger adults (those aged 18 to 29 years) are the least likely to wear seat belts (55%), as are adults with the lowest levels of education and income (Table 10-2).

TABLE 10-2

PERCENT OF THOSE TAKING AUTO SAFETY PRECAUTIONS BY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

	Base		Wear Seat Belt All the Time in Auto	Base: Those Who Drive		Never Exceed Speed Limit*	Never Drive After Drinking or Never Drink**
Total	1250	%	63	1121	%	49	79
Region							
East	304	%	60	257	%	45	73
South	394	%	64	351	%	53	85
Midwest	303	%	61	284	%	53	75
West	249	%	67	229	%	41	79
Urbanism							
Central City	364	%	65	314	%	51	79
Rest of metropolitan area	585	%	64	526	%	48	76
Outside metropolitan area	301	%	59	281	%	49	84
Sex							
Male	595	%	58	555	%	44	72
Female	655	%	67	566	%	54	86
Race							
White	1057	%	64	963	%	49	78
Black	101	%	49	82	%	39	78
Hispanic	68	%	64	60	%	61	89
Age							
18 - 29 years	303	%	55	270	%	33	76
30 - 39 years	300	%	69	288	%	47	69
40 - 49 years	213	%	67	197	%	50	77
50 - 64 years	239	%	60	219	%	64	86
65 and over	192	%	66	145	%	62	91
Education							
Not high school graduate	176	%	52	126	%	58	92
High school graduate	438	%	58	390	%	52	84
Some college	315	%	66	297	%	45	74
Four-year college graduate	317	%	74	305	%	44	69
Household Income							
$7,500 or less	97	%	51	70	%	55	88
$7,501 - $15,000	156	%	51	134	%	52	84
$15,001 - $25,000	247	%	62	223	%	52	80
$25,001 - $35,000	210	%	63	192	%	52	78
$35,001 - $50,000	214	%	74	210	%	50	77
$50,001 and over	232	%	73	221	%	35	68
Occupation							
Blue-collar labor, service	318	%	54	294	%	47	78
Clerical, sales	201	%	68	185	%	51	78
Professional, manager or proprietor	298	%	71	289	%	41	69

*Drivers who drive at or below the speed limit all the time.
** Drivers who never drive after drinking, or never drink.

SPEEDING

Given the known correlation between speeding and highway injuries and deaths, seat belt usage is particularly critical because only half (49%) of the nation's drivers drive at or below the speed limit all of the time (Table 10-1). This percentage has remained relatively constant since 1985, although it has decreased since 1983.

The age group least likely to wear seat belts is also the group least likely to respect speed limits. Only one-third of Americans between 18 and 29 years of age drive at or below the speed limit. The picture is not completely disheartening, however, as those with lower levels of education and income (who are less likely to wear seat belts) are

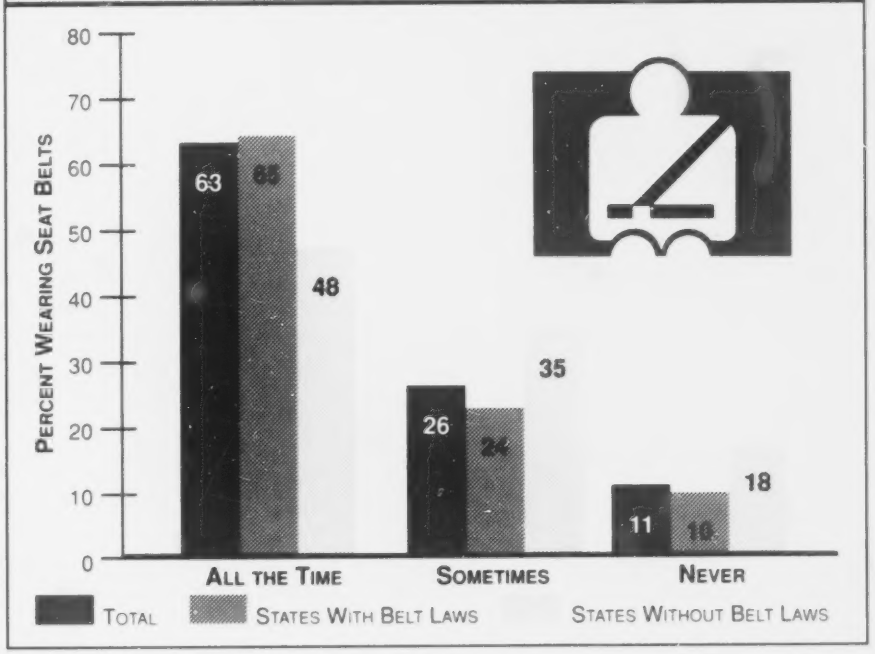
more likely to obey the speed limits than their more educated and wealthier counterparts. This could also result because those in higher income brackets own faster, sportier cars.

Drinking and Driving

Over half (56%) of adults who drive report that they "never" drive after they have been drinking alcoholic beverages. Another 23 percent of drivers say that they do not drink. This leaves about one-fifth (19%) of drivers who report that they "sometimes" drive after they have been drinking, and 2 percent who say that they "always" drive after drinking.

Adults who do drink and drive tend to be men rather than women (28% vs. 14%), between 30 and 39 years of age, more educated, have higher-than-average household incomes, and be in professional or managerial positions.

FIGURE 10-A
SEAT BELT USE — 1989



PROCEDURES FOR COMPUTING THE PREVENTION INDEX

The Prevention Index is developed from information collected by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. in two national surveys:

1. Self-reported practice of preventive health and safety behaviors based on a national probability sample of 1,250 adults in the continental United States 18 years of age and older.
2. Ratings on the relative importance of each of these behaviors for preventing disease and disability in the general population (scale of 1 to 10), as determined by a sample of 103 representative experts in disease prevention and health promotion.

Twenty-one of the behaviors measured in the Harris national probability survey of adults were selected for inclusion in the Prevention Index according to the following criteria:

1. A documented relationship between the health behavior and disease or disability as published in the professional literature.
2. Behaviors that are relevant to the entire adult population.
3. Behaviors that can be controlled or affected by individuals (therefore, the exclusion of important environmental determinants of health such as exposure to air pollution or industrial toxins).

Currently accepted standards of practice for each behavior were determined by thorough review of the professional literature and consultation with experts. Those standards were used to compute the practice frequencies for each of the Index health behaviors.

For continuous variables (for example, moderate alcohol consumption, exercise or frequency of dental examination), practice was determined by the prevailing consensus in the relevant professional literature and from personal consultation with researchers and spokespersons of professional organizations. For those behaviors with no clear consensus on a minimum compliance level (for example, taking steps to control stress or restricting cholesterol intake), practice was defined in terms of either always engaging in the behavior (taking steps to control stress) or of trying a lot (restricting cholesterol intake). The practice definitions for each health and safety behavior and relevant documentation are presented in the Prevention Index technical report.

The Index is computed on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 representing 100 percent of the adult population of the continental United States age 18 and over practicing all of the 21 key health behaviors. The Index is calculated by:

1. Multiplying the percentage of the adult population who report engaging in each health behavior by its experts' rating;
2. Adding the 21 products together;
3. Adjusting the resulting total to a scale of 100.

A detailed description of the development and computation of the Prevention Index and related analyses is presented in the technical report, "The Prevention Index: A Report Card on the Nation's Health," available from *Prevention* Magazine.

A NOTE ON SURVEY METHODS

The 1989 survey data in this report are based on interviews with 1,250 randomly selected adults across the country, conducted by telephone from November 6 to December 13, 1989. The overall completion rate for this survey was 59 percent of eligible households reached. The 41 percent noncompletion rate includes initial refusals, plus terminations during the course of the interview.

All seven surveys from 1983 to 1989 followed the same procedures in every detail in order to facilitate comparisons.

Harris national public cross sections are weighted to the Census Bureau's latest population parameters on sex, race, age and income. This adjusts these key variables, where necessary, to their actual proportions in the population in order to correct for subgroup variations in telephone penetration and nonresponse rates.

YOUR PERSONAL PREVENTION PROFILE

The Prevention Index takes stock of the nation's health, but you can score your own prevention profile by taking the test below.

Please carefully check "YES" or "NO" to each of the following questions.	**YES**	**NO**
1. Do you have a blood pressure reading at least once a year?	☐	☐
2. Do you go to the dentist at least once a year for treatment or a checkup?	☐	☐
Thinking about your personal diet and nutrition, do you try a lot to . . .		
3. Avoid eating too much salt or sodium?	☐	☐
4. Avoid eating too much fat?	☐	☐
5. Eat enough fiber from whole grains, cereals, fruits, and vegetables?	☐	☐
6. Avoid eating too many high cholesterol foods, such as eggs, dairy products, and fatty meats?	☐	☐
7. Get enough vitamins and minerals in foods or in supplements?	☐	☐
8. Avoid getting too much sugar and sweet food?	☐	☐
9. Is your body weight within the recommended range for your sex, height, and bone structure?	☐	☐
10. Do you exercise strenuously (that is, so you breathe heavily and your heart and pulse rate are accelerated for a period lasting at least 20 minutes) three days or more a week?	☐	☐
11. Do you smoke cigarettes now?	☐	☐
12. Do you consciously take steps to control or reduce stress in your life?	☐	☐
13. Do you usually sleep a total of 7 to 8 hours during each 24-hour day? (if you usually sleep either more or less than this, please mark "no".)	☐	☐
14. Do you socialize with close friends, relatives or neighbors at least once a week?	☐	☐
15. In general, when you drink alcoholic beverages, do you consume less than 14 drinks* per week and less than five on any single day? (Mark "yes" only if the answer to both parts of this question is "yes". If you never drink at all, also mark "yes")	☐	☐
16. Do you wear a seat belt all the time when you are in the front seat of a car?	☐	☐
17. Do you drive at or below the speed limit all the time? (If you don't drive, please mark "yes".)	☐	☐
18. Do you ever drive after drinking (If you don't drive or if you don't drink, please mark "no".)	☐	☐
19. Do you have a smoke detector in your home?	☐	☐
20. Does anyone in your household smoke in bed?	☐	☐
21. Do you take any special steps or precautions to avoid accidents in and around your home?	☐	☐

* By a "drink," we mean a drink with a shot of hard liquor, a can or bottle of beer, or a glass of wine.

The correct answer for questions 11, 18 and 20 is "no." The correct answer for all the other questions is "yes." Add up your total number of correct responses. Then, divide that number by 21, which tells you the percentage of the 21 Prevention Index behaviors that you practice.

Additional Reports Available:

The Prevention Index: A Report Card on the Nation's Health, technical report.

Prevention in America: Steps People Take – or Fail to Take – for Better Health. In-depth reports on each of the seven Louis Harris surveys for *Prevention* Magazine. Reports are numbered from 1 to 7, and cover the surveys conducted in 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, and 1989, respectively.

Prevention in America: The Experts Rate 65 Steps to Better Health, 1983 survey conducted by Louis Harris & Associates for *Prevention* Magazine.

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